BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2006FOR0194-001553
Dec. 27, 2006

Ministry of Forests and Range
Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd.

PRINCE GEORGE HOUSING DESIGN AIDS TSUNAMI VICTIMS

PRINCE GEORGE – B.C. forest products and engineering expertise are providing hundreds of Indonesian families in remote villages devastated by the 2004 tsunami with their first permanent homes in two years, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman announced today.

"B.C.'s value-added wood products and construction techniques are among the best in the world," said Coleman. "It's rewarding to see B.C. products and practices being used to help with Indonesia's housing needs as they rebuild the communities and lives of those families displaced by the tsunami."

Simon Yu, owner of the Prince George-based consultancy and engineering firm Simon and Co., is overseeing completion of the first of the 267 homes being built in northern Sumatra using pressure-treated structural lumber and plywood from British Columbia.

International aid efforts have raised hundreds of millions of dollars for tsunami relief, but the process to reconstruct the devastated communities has been slow. Of the 120,000 homes that need to be rebuilt, only 15,000 have been constructed. Families continue to live in tents, temporary shelters or with relatives.

"Building homes in Sumatra is quite challenging," said Yu. "The homes must be affordable and able to withstand earthquakes, severe weather and termites. And because most of the road system along the coastline was destroyed by the tsunami, delivering supplies to remote communities often has to be done on foot."

Using Canadian engineering standards, Simon and Co. developed a wood-frame house design that tested at the British Columbia Institute of Technology to be stronger and more durable than brick or cement-block buildings. Pressure-treated structural lumber and plywood from B.C. are shipped to Indonesia and assembled on-site using local construction crews supervised by Simon and Co.

The Simon and Co. homes are part of a pilot project with the Indonesian government's agency in charge of tsunami reconstruction. The contract is the second major housing relief project awarded to a B.C. company. Earlier this year Britco Structures of Langley was awarded a contract to ship 300 pre-fabricated homes to Sumatra. Both projects are expected to lead to follow-up contracts for several thousands dwellings.

Last year, the Province invested more than $200,000 for Simon and Co., Britco, Winston Global, and Chateau Building Products Ltd. to build demonstration homes in Sumatra. Through Forestry Innovation Investment, the Province also engaged the British Columbia Institute of Technology to train Indonesians on how to assemble the first houses that began arriving in November.

-more-

"The upfront work the Province has done to demonstrate relief housing is paying off," said Prince George North MLA Pat Bell. "Indonesian officials now recognize how well-suited B.C.'s wood products and housing designs are to their recovery efforts."

"It's important that our forest and value-added industries are constantly looking for, and able to develop, new markets to remain sustainable and profitable," said Prince George-Omineca MLA John Rustad.

"After the tragedy that struck this region two years ago, the local people have been diligently working to rebuild their communities," said Prince George-Mount Robson MLA Shirley Bond. "I'm proud that a Prince George-based company is having an important role in this difficult process."

The tsunami that devastated parts of Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India happened Dec. 26, 2004, following an undersea earthquake in the Indian Ocean. An estimated 285,000 people were killed in the disaster and another 1.7 million people displaced due to the destruction of their homes and communities. Property damage and losses are estimated at more than $5.2 billion.

-30-

Media contact: Paul Woolley
Communications
250 387-8486

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca.